

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Glycemic Control and Hypoglycemia: Is the Loser the Winner?

Response to Perlmutter et al.

In their otherwise excellent editorial, Perlmutter et al. (1) make the following statement: "Thus, in both sexes, the warning signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia are typically not exhibited until blood glucose drops to dangerously low levels." From the context, one should conclude that this sentence is referring to individuals who have nocturnal hypoglycemia or some other form of neuroendocrine desensitization frequently referred to as "hypoglycemia unawareness," which represents a clear minority of people with type 1 diabetes. The vast majority of

people with type 1 diabetes have symptoms well above that threshold and self-treat these symptoms before becoming impaired.

However, as someone who has spent much of his professional career defending the rights of people with diabetes to engage in any occupation for which they are otherwise qualified, I can assure the readers of *Diabetes Care* that there will be employers who attempt to take this sentence out of context and interpret it to read such that it applies to all people with type 1 diabetes. It could then be used as an excuse to exclude people with type 1 diabetes from a variety of positions, as was the case of Gary Branham, who was excluded from being an IRS special agent until this decision was reversed in court (2).

I urge the editors of *Diabetes Care* and the authors of the editorial to clarify this statement so that it is clear that the vast majority of hypoglycemic episodes in people with type 1 diabetes are self-treated and do not result in the loss of ability to engage in day-to-day personal or professional activities.

CHARLES M. CLARK, JR., MD

From the Continuing Medical Education Program, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana

Corresponding author: Charles M. Clark, chclark@iupui.edu.

DOI: 10.2337/dc08-2047

© 2009 by the American Diabetes Association. Readers may use this article as long as the work is properly cited, the use is educational and not for profit, and the work is not altered. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> for details.

Acknowledgments—No potential conflicts of interest relevant to this article were reported.

References

1. Perlmutter LC, Flanagan BP, Shah PH, Singh SP: Glycemic control and hypoglycemia: is the loser the winner? *Diabetes Care* 31:2072–2076, 2008
2. Ruder K: Diabetes goes to court: the IRS said Gary Branham couldn't be promoted because of his diabetes: he fought back. *Diabetes Forecast* 59:69–71, 2006